NATIONAL CONGRESS
Bulletin

OCTOBER, 1939

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS
600 South Michigan Boulevard Chicago, Illinois

Vol. 7 — No. 2

Dear Local President:

Today I am making one of the happiest announcements it has ever been my privilege to bring to you. Into the mails is going a copy of the November issue of the *National Parent-Teacher* for each and every one of our nearly thirty thousand local associations.

In these crucial days there is imperative need for all parent-teacher members together to clarify and reiterate their stand upon the important problems which affect the lives of our children and youth. And in these crucial days there is need, too, for a more realistic understanding of the role of the parent-teacher association in meeting these serious problems. Our magazine as a great educative force in the Congress may bring to the entire membership the sum total of parent-teacher activity, opportunity, and responsibility. But before the *National Parent-Teacher* can enable us to fulfil our purpose it must become a living part of the experience of parent-teacher members in every local community.

In sending you this magazine we believe we are touching the entire membership of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. As president of a local association it is one of your official duties, as well as your high privilege, to introduce the members to their magazine. The work of your local association will be strengthened and enriched by the increased number of subscribers.

I am hopefully counting on you to share with each other and with me this service to our entire membership.

Frances S. Pettengill

President
National Congress of Parents and Teachers

SIGNPOSTS AND GUIDES

Getting Under Way

"Democracy as a way of life has not yet become a reality in the home, the school, or the community. Neither adults nor youth have understood the ideals or the practical techniques of democracy."

— FROM THE 1939 CONVENTION FINDINGS

DEMOCRATIC living in a family is difficult to achieve, but it is worthy of our best efforts because it brings with it the satisfaction which can be obtained only through the recognition of human worth and the joys of seeing the full development of the family members. In other words, in the family we should see democracy at its best.

In every family there arise situations which test the ability of parents to make democratic procedures the basis of their family living. How will the wise parent meet such everyday situations as these?

- A fourteen-year-old girl wants very much to be left entirely alone as to any explanation of where she goes when she leaves home. She maintains that she is able to make her own decisions.
- A child of three feels perfectly safe in crossing streets alone and insists upon doing so even to the point of having a tantrum when restrained.
- A boy of nine announces that he has decided to change his middle name.
- Children in a family of four continually quarrel over the use of the radio. The parents have their own ideas on what are good radio programs, but these ideas do not agree with the ideas of any one of the four.
- A girl, sixteen, has announced her intention of marching in a labor parade. Her father is president of a very conservative business firm.
- A boy of twelve and another of fifteen, both above average ability in intelligence, care nothing about school work. They barely get by.
- A girl of fourteen decides to spend three months' allowance on a lace party dress which, in any event, according to her mother's standards is unsuitable.
- A boy of fifteen refuses to do anything in school work which will bring him more than a "D" grade. He says it isn't worth it; there are other things more important.
- A girl of sixteen doesn't want to go to college. She has besought her parents to allow her to take the money and time that college would take and let her browse around the world.
- A boy of fourteen can't spell; in spite of all that his teachers and parents can do he still can't spell; says he doesn't need to. He is going to be a businessman, and he will have a secretary.
- A boy of eight enjoys games very much but only as long as he wins.
- A boy of twelve with above average intelligence says that you can't be too smart in school because the other boys don't like it; so he says, "I don't know." He gets poor grades, is popular with the boys but not with his parents.
- A boy of twelve, a voracious reader, reads everything he can lay his hands upon, with no discrimination of any sort. He is equally interested in *National Geographic* and *True Stories.*
- A girl of eight refuses to go to Sunday-school; says it is silly; her parents think otherwise, yet they want her to be independent and make her own choices.
- A boy of nine when he does not succeed in what he attempts to do says, "I don't care," shrugs his shoulders and apparently doesn't care.
- A boy of ten was left in charge of his room at school one day and told to report later to the teacher the names of any of the boys who created a disturbance. When the teacher returned, the disturbance was evident but no names were forthcoming. The boy says he wouldn't tattle for any teacher.

WISE parents know that there isn't any machinery which will enable them easily to turn their homes into a genuine democracy. They understand that democracy is in the last analysis more a matter of feelings and attitudes than of techniques. They recognize, however, that there are certain characteristics which the home is peculiarly fitted to inculcate into young children, and that in these characteristics lie the democratic answers to the situations described. These characteristics, forming the basis for democratic behavior in home, and later in school and community, are:

A deep sense on the part of each member of the family of his own personal worth; the worth of his fellow members.

A realization on the part of each member that he has not only the right but also the obligation to develop his own talents.

A sense of his right to equality of consideration and opportunity.

The ability to exercise free speech and a love for doing so.

The habit of independent action, insofar as it is consistent with the rights of others.

The habit of forming judgments and acting on the basis of intelligent consideration and not upon the basis of emotion or external dictation.

The ability to withstand the subtle or heavy barrages of suggestions that might lead to the abandonment of intelligent self-interest and group interest.

A genuine concern for the welfare of others through the development of social consciousness, goodwill, unselfishness, and tolerance.

A willingness to submerge one's individual interests for the good of all; in other words, self-control.

Intelligent participation in working out the ideals and forms of group control; in other words, self-government.

A respect for democratically constituted authority.

A recognition of the importance of intelligent and altruistic leadership.

A vivid appreciation of the nature and operation of democratic institutions.

An active acceptance of the need for each to do useful work.

A realization of the worth to the individual and the group of playing together.

THROUGH THE YEAR WITH THE P.T.A.

October: The Membership Grows

WHY JOIN THE PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATION? This question will be asked by thousands of parents and teachers during October as each of nearly 30,000 Congress parent-teacher associations enroll members for the year.

All too frequently the stock reply is, "For purposes of cooperation between home and school." That answer is good, but it does not give the complete picture and isn't as convincing as it should be.

People everywhere are concerned about children. They will be interested in the parent-teacher association if they know definitely that it is a cooperative force for children and young people; that it is an educational medium through which parents learn about their profession of parenthood; that it is a strong influence which can and does affect home, school, and community conditions.

As a cooperative force for children and youth, the parent-teacher association promotes activities bearing directly upon the well-being of children, such as health projects, in nutrition and medical and dental care; recreational projects, including playgrounds and suitable motion pictures and radio programs; educational projects, such as establishing and maintaining school and public libraries; and such other practical measures as each association evolves to meet its own needs.

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Parent-teacher associations affect the welfare of children indirectly by informing the community concerning the needs of children and youth; by arousing public opinion to the support of needed changes in the community and of legislation which will result in more wholesome environment and greater opportunity.

Membership in a Congress parent-teacher association carries with it the satisfaction of participating in definite practical action on behalf of children.

As an educational medium through which parents learn about their profession of parenthood, the parent-teacher association serves its community in direct proportion to the educational opportunities which it offers and the members' willingness to avail themselves of these same opportunities.

The members of no other profession enter the ranks of that profession with so little specific preparation for the work as do parents. Those who become aware of their own lack of preparation find much to help them in the programs, discussions, and study classes of their P.T.A.

Membership in a Congress parent-teacher association offers parents opportunity for a clearer understanding of the child's school life; opportunity to become acquainted with the parents of those children who become the playmates of their own children; and opportunity through study and through observation to become increasingly aware of their own children's needs and of the best ways to meet those needs.

The parent-teacher association provides a natural and proper setting for the teacher and for the parent, a setting in which each can interpret his part in the child's life and growth.

As a strong influence on home, school, and community conditions, the parent-teacher association offers new and challenging opportunities for its members. The "always tardy" mother will be challenged to instil habits of promptness in her own children; the father who has been indifferent to commercial exploitation of children in his neighborhood will be challenged to aid in routing the sale of salacious literature, narcotics, and liquor to minors; the teacher will be challenged to acquire greater knowledge about the child in his home environment.

City ordinances, state and national legislation take on a new significance when parents and teachers discuss the particulars in the light of their own children's lives and futures.

All of these services are rendered by a parent-teacher association for the children of the community — clarified understanding of children's needs in home, school, and community, and concerted efforts of all who are interested in children to meet those needs adequately.

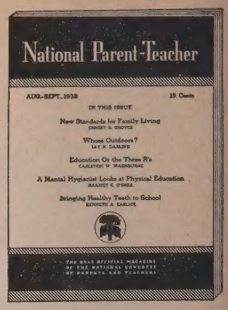
WHY A CONGRESS P.T.A. is a question asked almost as frequently as is our first question. The age-old story "together we stand, divided we fall" is one answer. Fifty members of a local association can accomplish more for that community than a lone parent or teacher can achieve; the strength that comes from uniting all the parents and teachers of a state and of a nation is apparent.

Membership in a Congress parent-teacher association is unique in that each individual who joins thereby becomes a member of the state Congress and of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

The problems which are involved in rearing one generation of citizens after another are common throughout the nation. It is only by united effort that all children will profit by the accumulated knowledge and experience gained in parent-teacher associations.

And an increased membership in each local association will mean added strength to the movement in the community, in the state, and in the nation.

NATIONAL PARENT-TEACHER



News About Our Magazine

IT is the purpose of this page to keep local leaders informed about the *National Parent-Teacher* and to suggest ways by which they can increase subscriptions among those who are meeting and working in the interests of children and youth.

THE *National Parent-Teacher* is the voice of the parent-teacher movement, the official spokesman of the organization that unites thousands of parent-teacher associations in home-school activities. The Magazine deals simply and directly with timely subjects of deep concern to the members of these associations. Its content denotes an unwavering faithfulness to the ideals and objectives of the organization. Every word, every line has parent-teacher meaning and purpose. For parent-teacher members, the *National Parent-Teacher* is unsurpassed in value and timeliness.

As an illustration, we call attention to the series of articles on "The Purposes of Education in American Democracy." Long before others sensed the growing need for a restatement of our democratic principles and for directing parent-teacher attention to the importance of an educational philosophy that would insure our democratic way of life, the *National Parent-Teacher* was in the field and abreast of the times with this series of articles on the subject — articles which have been referred to in some of the most notable forums and discussion groups in the country. So valuable were the presentations of this timely series that the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Educational Policies Commission, and the National Education Association cooperated in making the articles available in reprint form so that their usefulness might be extended.

● Of significance to parent-teacher groups is the new series of articles now appearing in the current issues under the title "Education for Civic Responsibility." Among the challenging subjects being discussed monthly are: *Social Justice, Law Observance, Conservation, Tolerance, World Citizenship, Economic Literacy, Political Citizenship.*

● The Magazine recognizes the needs of the individual parent. In each issue there is material of special interest to today's parent who has to make frequent adjustments to ever-changing situations in the home; who has to deal with specific problems of behavior, health, recreation, personality, and the like.

● Among the outstanding writers who contribute to the November issue are:

Eduard C. Lindeman, professor of philosophy at the New York School of Social Work and lecturer in the New School for Social Research. Dr. Lindeman began his formal education at the age of twenty-one, after he had spent twelve years in various occupations and industries.

John M. Dorsey, well-known psychiatrist at the University of Michigan Medical School, and author of the book, "The Foundations of Human Behavior." Dr. Dorsey's work keeps him in touch with youngsters, college students, and adults who are in need of mental hygiene.

Mathilde Elisebeth Brugger, a vice-president of the Association for Childhood Education. Miss Brugger has had years of experience in parent education and in public school kindergarten work.

IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE

- **Lighted Lamps — *The President's Message***
- **The Need for Tolerance**
- **Children's Quarrels**
- **The Ramparts of Truth**
- **Educating Your Child to Sex Life**
- **"I Can Do It Myself"**
- **"For Want of a Nail"**
- **Are Delinquent Boys Different?**
- **As Told by Our National Chairmen**
- **Editorial**
- **"Ideas Are on the Wing"**
- **Parent-Teacher Projects and Purposes**

Subscription Rate — $1 a year.

G. Bromley Oxnam, Resident Bishop of the Methodist Church, Boston Area, and formerly president of De Pauw University. Bishop Oxnam began his career as a minister and teacher of theology. He is a member of many distinguished religious and academic societies as well as the author of many volumes dealing with religion.

Thomas F. Vance, professor of child development at Iowa State College and chairman of the Homemaking committee of the Iowa Congress of Parents and Teachers. Dr. Vance's nontechnical discussions of child growth have for many years served as primers to parents.

Frank P. Graham, president of the University of North Carolina. Dr. Graham delivered the opening address to the seminar groups of delegates who attended the Congress on Education for Democracy.

● Articles presented by these authors can be made the basis of association panel discussions, forums, and study courses that will readily stimulate membership interest, participation, and activity.

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SO significant to the progress and development of parent-teacher work is the material in the *National Parent-Teacher,* that we urge every parent-teacher leader to bring it to the attention of the entire membership. While each local president will know best how to do this in his or her particular group, three general suggestions may be helpful:

1. *A magazine chairman may be appointed to work closely with the president in devising ways to interest the members in the Magazine.*
2. *Each month material from this page of the* Bulletin *may be copied and placed in the hands of members.*
3. *A special committee may be appointed to keep the members informed about the Magazine.*

A packet of promotion material may be secured from the Magazine Office.